

**INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Property/District Name: Bladensburg Dueling Grounds Survey Number: PG68-14

Tax Parcel#: _____

Project: US Alt 1 (Bladensburg Rd) Planning Study from D.C. Line to 40th Ave Agency: MDOT-SHA

Site visit by MHT Staff: no yes Name _____ Date _____

Eligibility recommended X Eligibility **not** recommended _____

Criteria: X A B C D Considerations: A B C D E F G None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

The Bladensburg Dueling Grounds (PG68-14), located on Oak Street near Bladensburg Road, are eligible due to the fact that the site meets National Register Criterion A. Preliminary research has not revealed any association between the site and the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B). The grounds do not represent the work of a master or display high artistic merit (Criterion C). Nor are they likely to yield information important in history or prehistory (Criterion D). The property does, however, reveal an association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history (Criterion A). Thus, the Bladensburg Dueling Grounds are National Register-eligible.

The Bladensburg Dueling Grounds were the site of more than 50 duels fought during the 1800s. The most famous duel fought there took place between Commodores Stephen Decatur and James Barron in 1820. The notoriety of the site led Congress to outlaw dueling in 1839, although duels continued to be fought on these grounds until the Civil War period.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form

and US Alt 1 (Bladensburg Rd) from D.C. Line to 40th Ave Planning Study Summary of Results

Prepared by: Traceries, 5420 Western Ave., Chevy Chase, MD 20815 January 1998

[Signature] 8/21/98
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services Date

NR program concurrence: Xyes no not applicable

[Signature] 8/24/98
Reviewer, NR Program Date

[Handwritten initials]

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITES SUMMARY SHEET

P.G. County Survey # 68-14 Date 19th century
~~Building~~ Name Bladensburg Dueling Grounds
Location Rte.#1 at Bladensburg Ave., Bladensburg, Md.
Open to Public x yes no

This is a grassy park area, the site of many duels during the nineteenth century. It was part of the tract Chittam Castle Manor (later known as Chillum) patented in 1763 by William Digges. It remained in the Digges family until 1845.

Research has established at least 26 recorded duels at the Bladensburg grounds, although tradition increases the count to 50. Some of the more famous include the following. In December 1809, General John Jackson, Congressman from Virginia and brother-in-law of Mrs. Dolley Madison, got into a political dispute with Joseph Pearson, Congressman from North Carolina. Jackson was seriously wounded, and recuperated at the nearby home of Mrs. Digges where he was visited by President and Mrs. Madison. Probably the most famous duel occurred in 1820 when Commodores James Barron and Stephen Decatur settled a long-standing feud at the Bladensburg dueling grounds. Decatur received a mortal wound and died soon afterwards at his house on Lafayette Square.

The movement against dueling reached a peak in 1838 after the duel between Congressmen Jonathan Cilley of Maine and William Graves of Kentucky. Cilley, who was a friend of author Nathaniel Hawthorne, was killed in the duel, and Hawthorne wrote a memorial to Cilley in the Democratic Review. Reaction to the Graves-Cilley duel led to increasing pressure to outlaw the practice of dueling. In theory, dueling had always been illegal in the United States, and after the Civil War the practice died out fully.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bladensburg Dueling Grounds

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Rte. #1 at Bladensburg Avenue, between 37th Pl. & 38th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Bladensburg

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

P.G.

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☒ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Md. National Capital Park & Planning

Telephone #: 277-2200

STREET & NUMBER

Kenilworth Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Riverdale;

VICINITY OF

Maryland

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. P.G. County Courthouse

Liber #: 891,

Folio #: 452

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

P.G. Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Surratt House

9110 Brandywine Road

CITY, TOWN

Clinton

STATE

Maryland

7 DESCRIPTION

PG:68-14

CONDITION

___EXCELLENT
___GOOD
___FAIR

___DETERIORATED
___RUINS
___UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

___UNALTERED
___ALTERED

CHECK ONE

___ORIGINAL SITE
___MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a grassy park area, the site of many historic nineteenth century duels.

.....
Graves of Kentucky. Cilley, who was a friend of author Nathaniel Hawthorne, was killed in the duel, and Hawthorne wrote a memorial to Cilley in the Democratic Review. Reaction to the Graves-Cilley duel led to increasing pressure to outlaw the practice of dueling. In theory, dueling had always been illegal in the United States, and after the Civil War the practice died out fully.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION	xlocal history			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This was the site of numerous duels during the nineteenth century. It was part of the tract Chittam Castle Manor (later known as Chillum) patented in 1763 by William Digges. It remained in the Digges family until 1845.

Research has established at least 26 recorded duels at the Bladensburg grounds, although tradition increases the count to 50. The first recorded duel took place in 1808 between Congressman Gardinier (N.Y.) and Campbell (Tenn.). Gardinier was wounded, but recovered. The last is believed to have occurred in 1868 between General Lawrence, U.S. Minister to Costa Rica, and Baron Kusserow, Secretary of the German legation, in which a reconciliation was effected.

Between these dates occurred a long list of duels between prominent men. Some of the more famous include the following. In December 1809, General John G. Jackson, Congressman from Virginia and brother-in-law of Mrs. Dolley Madison, got into a political dispute with Joseph Pearson, Congressman from North Carolina. Jackson was seriously wounded, and recuperated at the nearby home of Mrs. Digges where he was visited by President and Mrs. Madison. Probably the most famous duel occurred in 1820 when Commodores James Barron and Stephen Decatur settled a long-standing feud at the Bladensburg dueling grounds. Decatur received a mortal wound and died soon afterwards at his house on Lafayette Square.

The movement against dueling reached a peak in 1838 after the duel between Congressmen Jonathan Cilley of Maine and William

(continued on facing page)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

(previous)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Deeds #891/452; #591/67.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION _____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Shirley Baltz/Susan Pearl

ORGANIZATION

P.G. Historical & Cultural Trust

DATE

May 1979

STREET & NUMBER

9110 Brandywine Road

TELEPHONE

599-6776

CITY OR TOWN

Clinton, Md.

STATE

20735

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

PG #68-14
P.G. 74
1700744307

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Dueling Grounds

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Oak Street, near Bladensburg Rd.

CITY, TOWN

Colmar Manor

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Prince George's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ☐ DISTRICT
- ☐ BUILDING(S)
- ☐ STRUCTURE
- ☒ SITE
- ☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ☒ PUBLIC
- ☐ PRIVATE
- ☐ BOTH
- ☐ PUBLIC ACQUISITION
- ☐ IN PROCESS
- ☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- ☐ OCCUPIED
- ☐ UNOCCUPIED
- ☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ☒ ACCESSIBLE
- ☐ YES: RESTRICTED
- ☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ☐ NO

PRESENT USE

- ☐ AGRICULTURE
- ☐ COMMERICAL
- ☐ EDUCATIONAL
- ☐ ENTERTAINMENT
- ☐ GOVERNMENT
- ☐ INDUSTRIAL
- ☐ MILITARY
- ☒ MUSEUM
- ☒ PARK
- ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ☐ RELIGIOUS
- ☐ SCIENTIFIC
- ☐ TRANSPORTATION
- ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Telephone #: 277-2200

STREET & NUMBER

6600 Kenilworth Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Riverdale

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prince George's County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**☐ EXCELLENT☐ GOOD☒ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED**CHECK ONE**☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED**CHECK ONE**☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a small, 3 acre park-located in a ravine just off Bladensburg Rd. It is at the head of a small creek that flows into the Anacostia River. An historic marker was placed here by the Parks Department, in a ceremony held Jan. 13, 1955. An asphalt basketball court sits in the middle of the park.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This was a notorious dueling grounds, where more than 50 duels were fought during the early 1800's. The most famous took place between Commodores Stephen Decatur and James Barron in 1820. Decatur was fatally wounded in that encounter. The site was one that led Congress to outlaw dueling in 1839, although duels continued here up until the Civil War period.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- 1) Marker Ceremonies, Jan. 13, 1955-M-NCPPC Files.
 - 2) Articles in WASH. POST (1968) & WASH. STAR, "The Rambler" series-April & May, 1921 and Stephen Decatur article on Oct. 28, 1973.
 - 3) Interesting source is HARPER'S MAGAZINE, March, 1858.
- CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

2108 400 4 000

589-1480

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

M-NCPPC

DATE

3/2/73

STREET & NUMBER

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN

Silver Spring

STATE

Maryland

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PG:68-14

Bladensburg Dueling Grounds

Colmar Manor

Right half of stereograph labeled, "©-5616-Ravine at Bladensburg, Md., dueling ground near scene of British victory, 1814, Copyright Underwood and Underwood"





DUELING GROUNDS

ON THIS SITE, NOW PART OF ANACOSTIA RIVER PARK, MORE THAN 50 DUELS WERE FOUGHT DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY. HERE, ON WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS "THE DARK AND BLOODY GROUNDS," GENTLEMEN OF WASHINGTON SETTLED THEIR POLITICAL AND PERSONAL DIFFERENCES. ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS DISPUTES WAS THAT BETWEEN COMMODORES STEPHEN DECATUR AND JAMES BARRON, WHICH WAS SETTLED HERE ON MARCH 22, 1820. COMMODORE DECATUR, WHO HAD GAINED FAME AS THE CONQUEROR OF THE BARBARY PIRATES, WAS FATALLY WOUNDED BY HIS ANTAGONIST. ALTHOUGH CONGRESS PASSED AN ANTI-DUELING LAW IN 1839, DUELS CONTINUED HERE UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR.

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK
AND
PLANNING COMMISSION

NAME DWELING GROUNDS

PG. 68-14

LOCATION BLADENS BURG, Md. Rt. 1 & OAK ST,

EACADE

PHOTO TAKEN 3/2/73 M DWYER

RM-583



NAME DUELING GROUNDS - MNCPPC PARK

PG:68-14

LOCATION OAK ST. NEAR Rt 1 BLADENSBURG Md.

FACADE LOOKING SW

PHOTO TAKEN 3/2/73 M DWYER